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ABSTRACT

A study examined 1989 kindergarten (K) manuals of basal reading materials. The question of central concern was whether and how the manuals facilitate a teacher's efforts to match instruction with children's ability. A closely related concern was whether and how the manuals describe ways to keep some children occupied with useful activities so as to free a teacher to give time to others. Six examiners studied K manuals from six 1989 basal series and all met to discuss initial and overall impressions. To examine the nature of the lessons, 18 lessons were analyzed for the purpose of learning to what extent they were teacher-dependent. The numbers indicated that 83.7% of the activities classified were teacher-dependent. In addition, a large portion of the written exercises shown in the K manuals--72% to 100%--require an adult's attention. The third question dealt with objectives given; results indicated that none of the six manuals ever encouraged the teachers to consider the appropriateness of an objective for a particular student. The manuals were also examined to learn about the phonics instruction they provided. The overall conclusion was that those who planned the K manuals did not keep in mind two facts about kindergarten: (1) members of the class need many different kinds of instruction; and (2) teachers need suggestions for activities that 5-year-olds are capable of doing without help. (Three tables of data and four figures are included.) (MG)

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CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF READING

Technical Report No. 475

NEW KINDERGARTEN BASAL READER MATERIALS: WHAT'S A TEACHER SUPPOSED TO DO WITH ALL THIS?

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Abstract

In order to compete in the California textbook adoption process, a number of publishers of basal reader programs prepared materials to correspond to California's stated preferences. Unusually large manuals, starting as early as the kindergarten level, is one consequence. Given the time restrictions in many kindergarten programs, the first question addressed in the report is "What's a teacher supposed to do with all this?"

Another question originated in findings from two earlier studies of kindergarten: Five-year-olds vary greatly in what they know and can do. This fact accounts for the second question that guided the analysis of manuals described here, namely, Do manual suggestions facilitate a kindergarten teacher's efforts to match instruction with abilities?

The third question was not anticipated when the analysis began. It has to do with the lack of coordination in the instruction provided in kindergarten, readiness, and preprimer manuals. The problems this causes for textbook selection committees are discussed.

NEW KINDERGARTEN BASAL READER MATERIALS: WHAT'S A TEACHER SUPPOSED TO DO WITH ALL THIS?

Ten years ago, manuals in five basal reader programs were analyzed in order to learn what they suggested for teaching students how to comprehend connected discourse (Durkin, 1981). Two of the series examined had 1978 copyright dates; the other three were dated 1979. The analysis was prompted by earlier classroom observations in grades 3-6 in which it was found that practically nothing was done to teach comprehension even though a considerable amount of the teachers' time went to assessing it (Durkin, 1978-79). As it turned out, findings about the manuals duplicated the classroom-observation data: Suggestions for comprehension instruction were rare; suggestions for comprehension assessment were common.

A Second Analysis

Subsequent to the analysis of manuals just referred to, the comprehension process and comprehension instruction both became popular topics for researchers to study. This made it natural to wonder what effect all the research would have on basal manuals. Because a number of publishers of basal series were preparing new rather than updated programs to compete in the California textbook adoption process scheduled for 1988, it was thought that the new materials allowed for an ideal time to examine manuals again. Originally, the intention was to focus only on comprehension.

When the California State Department of Education circulated information about the kinds of materials it wanted (1987), a second topic took on significance because of a statement in the rating sheets that the California selection committee would use: "Note: Phonics instruction is to be completed by the end of second grade except in cases where students need remedial assistance." Such a request made two additional questions important to consider when the new programs became available. First, how did publishers respond to the suggestion for phonics instruction? Second, if the suggestion was followed, would authors of manuals for grades 3-6 write as if phonics had never been taught or, on the other hand, would they insert segments intermittently to encourage teachers to encourage students to use phonics for decoding unfamiliar words?

As the new series, all with 1989 copyright dates, became available to study, they immediately raised yet another question, namely, when and by whom was the voluminous amount of pre-preprimer material supposed to be used? (Preprimers are traditionally thought of as beginning first-grade readers.) Even though the unexpectedly large amount of material was likely to raise questions in the minds of many, it was findings from two studies of kindergarten (Durkin, 1987a, 1989) that influenced the decision to make pre-preprimer manuals one major focus in the new study of basal programs. Before these manuals are discussed, data from the two studies will be reviewed briefly.

Kindergarten Research

The first study was of 42 kindergarten classes, each observed on two successive days (Durkin, 1987a, 1987b). This research, whose central purpose was to learn what was being done to teach reading, took place when pre-preprimer basal materials commonly consisted of two readiness workbooks. One or both concentrated on visual and auditory discrimination exercises, which were offered to prepare for phonics. Eventually, the workbooks covered about 20 consonant sounds. Toward the end of the second workbook, some of the words in the first preprimer in the same basal series were taught, too.

It is necessary to refer to these materials because it became clear early in the year-long study of kindergartens that the observed teachers equated preparing children for reading with use of the basal workbooks. In fact, the one activity that was never absent when classrooms were visited was the use of a workbook plus extra phonics exercise sheets.

Equally common during the whole of the year was a reliance on nothing but whole class instruction to teach phonics, even when differences in children's abilities were too obvious for anyone to miss. How the teachers could continue with such instruction even as more and more children became restless and inattentive was something that none of the observers was able to understand.

The persistent use of whole class instruction, combined with an equally persistent dependence on workbooks to teach phonics, were two of the reasons for doing a second study (Durkin, 1989). In this instance, it was a year-long case study of one kindergarten teacher who believed it was necessary to teach the sounds covered in basal materials but who was willing to try teaching the sounds without workbooks. She was also willing to try to teach phonics and other subject matter to less than the whole class as a way of matching instruction with abilities.

Findings in this second study that are relevant to note are three in number. First, the children started kindergarten with great differences in what they knew about four topics commonly covered early in the school year: names of colors, shapes, numbers, and letters. On the four individually-administered tests given during the first week of school, scores for both the morning and afternoon classes ranged from the highest possible score to zero.

The second finding relevant to mention is that the differences in abilities persisted throughout the year. In fact, the range of differences was even greater at the end of the year when two individually-administered tests were given for letter-sound correspondences and word identification. But test scores were not required to reach this conclusion. Whenever the two kindergarten classes were observed, a persistent thought was, How quickly some children learn everything and, in contrast, how difficult it is for others to learn anything. Every observation, therefore, made whole class instruction more questionable than ever.

Questioning the use of nothing but whole class instruction is also related to the third finding that is relevant to report. It has to do with a problem that teachers at all grade levels refer to often: How can some children be kept profitably occupied while others receive instruction that reflects their needs? As the year-long study showed, this problem is particularly difficult to resolve when children are limited in what they can do independently and when, as was the case with the kindergarten being studied, a second adult is not available to supervise and help.

Kindergarten Materials in 1989 Basal Programs

Six 1989 basal series figured in the study of kindergarten manuals. They were chosen because they were new rather than updated programs.

Unexpectedly, which manual in the six programs was for kindergarten was not immediately apparent. In part, the lack of clarity was caused by the fact that each series has two manuals that precede the one for the preprimers. [The two will be referred to as the K (Kindergarten) and the R (Readiness) manuals.] Even when introductory pages in the manuals were read in order to learn what was intended for kindergarten, answers were not always found. One of the six series, for example, says nothing whatsoever about when its K and R manuals might be used. Two others give information that is evasive rather than helpful. With "level" standing for the order in which a manual appears in a series, the information that the two publishers provide is approximated below:

Level	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Grade	K	R	PP	P	1	2	2	3	3	4	5	6

In contrast to the two series just referred to, another states directly that its K manual is for kindergarten and its R manual is for first grade. Initially, this recommendation made it seem questionable to add to all the other materials in the program that are also said to be for first grade: three preprimers (PP), a primer (P), and a first reader (FR). However, when all the pages in these manuals and those in the R manual are added (R, PP, P, FR), the total (N = 1,343) is not excessive relative to the other five series. This is so because the total number of pages in PP, P, and FR manuals for each of the other five programs ranges from 1,013 to 1,558.

Another of the six series offers information about possible use of the K and R levels by describing a variety of options, some of which are unrealistic. One, for instance, suggests using in kindergarten both the K and R manuals, which have a combined total of 1,194 pages. Given the fact that 62% of kindergarten students are enrolled in part-day programs (Karweit, 1988), this does seem "a bit much."

In the sixth series, the K manual is clearly intended for kindergarten. Eleven introductory pages make this point. Less apparent is how the R component fits into the picture. Descriptive statements in the R manual indicate it reviews "critical skills" taught in K, that it can be covered in 4 weeks, and that it prepares children to be successful with the preprimers. Why a 681-page K manual is insufficient to allow for success with preprimers is a question that has no obvious answer.

Kindergarten Manuals

Based on available information, the first manual in each of the six series was assumed to be the one prepared for kindergarten. To show that the unexpected size of these manuals does not make them an atypical part of their respective series, the number of pages in manuals for the six programs, kindergarten through grade 6, is shown in Table 1 on page 5.

Why all the manuals are so large is accounted for by requests from the California State Department of Education (1987) as it made preparations to consider basal programs for possible adoption. Some of the suggestions that had an obvious impact on the kindergarten manuals include California's preference for integrated instruction in all the language arts; for a literature-based program; for opportunities for writing; for relating other content areas to the language arts; and for the inclusion of suggestions for extending the instructional program to the home. Equally apparent is an interest in covering phonics early.

Even though it is only manuals that were studied, it is worth noting that at the kindergarten level, additional materials that teachers are assumed to have are sizeable in number. They include Big Books, other books that are to be read to children, teaching charts, pocket charts, picture cards, letter cards, workbooks, copymasters, puppets, posters, and recorded songs and poems. "Supplementary materials" listed in the manuals are so copious that even naming a small portion would take up too much space. Together, the very large manuals and the necessary as well as the supplementary materials explain why, from the beginning of the analyses until the end, persons involved in the study remained puzzled about how teachers could ever (a) decide what to use from all that is offered, and (b) put the choices together in some meaningful, workable way. That such a challenge was impossible to meet for teachers with two half-day classes seemed like a defensible conclusion.

Initial Examination of the Manuals

As explained earlier, findings from two studies of kindergarten accounted for the decision to take a careful look at the 1989 kindergarten manuals. Because of those studies, the question of central concern was whether and how the manuals facilitate a teacher's efforts to match instruction with children's abilities. A closely related concern was whether and how the manuals describe ways to keep some children occupied with useful activities so as to free a teacher to give time to others. It is pertinent to note that these concerns parallel a statement in the California State Department

Table 1

Number of Pages in Manuals: Kindergarten - Grade 6*

Series	K	R	Grade 1		Grade 2			Grade 3		Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6
			Preprimers	Primer	First Reader	II[1]	II[2]	III[1]	III[2]			
A	681	146	533	435	401	633	619	641	612	919	918	983
B	579	615	600	472	526	652	662	725	692	910	902	923
C	481	146	471	369	357	439	395	512	546	794	787	778
D	477	257	698	389	406	623	612	696	651	985	933	941
E	341	219	459	331	223	395	385	398	401	680	688	705
F	317	292	756	354	458	530	443	416	443	670	702	701

*Excludes introductory material, scope and sequence charts, appendices, word lists, glossaries, and the like.

of Education publication (1987) referred to above: ". . . early language arts programs must provide for considerable flexibility in pacing and content . . ." (p. 27).

Before any specific decisions were made about how the analyses of the K manuals would be done, each of the six persons who served as an examiner assumed responsibility for getting acquainted with one K manual in a general but careful way. The examiners met at various times to discuss initial, overall impressions. Conclusions related to the concern about matching instruction with abilities included the following. All agreed that whole class instruction seemed to be taken for granted by those who planned the manuals in spite of the widespread attention that now goes to the interactive nature of literacy acquisition (Thomas, 1985). This characteristic tied in with the overall impression that procedures for realizing instructional objectives were teacher-dependent. All agreed, too, that keeping some children occupied while a teacher works with others must not have figured in the plans of those responsible for the manuals.

First Question: Nature of Lessons

Because teacher-dependent suggestions are hardly helpful to unassisted kindergarten teachers who want to match instruction with abilities, one decision was to analyze the K manuals by looking at recommendations for achieving instructional objectives. The size of the manuals prohibited looking at every lesson; consequently, each examiner used the following sampling procedure. First, a right-hand page close to the beginning of a manual was randomly selected. If an instructional objective did not appear on the page, the examiner moved toward the front of the manual, page by page, until an objective was found. What the manual suggested for achieving the objective was then read carefully in order to decide whether recommended procedures did or did not require the attention of a teacher or some other adult. Once each separate component of the lesson was catalogued as "Requires adult" or "Does not require adult," the examiners next selected at random a page in the middle of a manual and another page toward the end in order to find two additional lessons. In each case, the procedure followed for the initially selected objective was repeated. In the end, then, 18 "lessons" were analyzed for the purpose of learning to what extent they were, or were not, teacher-dependent. In each case, manual suggestions and examiners' decisions about them were checked for accuracy by this writer. As it turned out, no changes were made in the assigned classifications.

Results of the analyses are in Table 2, which is on page 8. The numbers listed in Table 2 indicate that in series A, to cite one illustration, the three lessons examined were composed of 43 procedures or activities, 83.7% of which were classified as teacher-dependent. To explain both "procedure" and "teacher-dependent," the first lesson randomly chosen in Series A will be described.

The objective of the lesson is "Recognizing the sound /b/ in initial position." The 12 procedures recommended for realizing the objective are listed below. Classifications are shown in the second column.

	Recommended Procedures	Classification
1.	Teacher (T.) points to B in "Little Boy Blue," which is in a Big Shared Book. Children are told they will learn about the letter B. The picture is then discussed.	Requires adult.
2.	T. reads one line of rhyme at a time, after which children "echo" (read) it.	Requires adult.

3.	T. says that three words in the poem begin with the same sound. Children are encouraged to find them.	Requires adult.
4.	T. pronounces the three words, after which the children say them. T. asks if anyone's name begins with the same sound. T. then names pairs of words so that children can raise their hands whenever both start with the sound being considered.	Requires adult.
5.	T. shows picture cards so that children can say which names start like "book."	Requires adult.
6.	Children draw pictures of objects whose names start with /b/. T. checks.	Does not require adult.
7.	All look at picture in workbook. Discuss its content and name whatever begins like "book."	Requires adult.
8.	Teacher, then children, pantomime words that begin like "book."	Requires adult.
9.	Picture of Little Boy Blue is used to prompt children to make up a story, which T. writes.	Requires adult.
10.	A chart, showing a sketch of Little Boy Blue on a farm, is displayed. One child is to go to the chart to draw a line from Boy to sheep. Children are then asked to name other animals in picture.	Requires adult.
11.	Partners cut out magazine pictures of objects whose names begin with /b/. Glue pictures to paper.	Does not require adult.
12.	T. is encouraged to read Three Bears or Brown Bear, Brown Bear.	Requires adult.

In addition to explaining "procedure" and "teacher-dependent," the components of the lesson just described are useful in illustrating the "California effect" on 1989 basal programs. Specifically, Activity #1 reflects requests for a literature-based program and for relating what is taught to text that children read. The underlying theme of the total lesson satisfies California's interest in teaching phonics early.

Activity #9 adheres to the interest of the California textbook selection committee in writing, whereas Activity #10, which is listed under "Social Studies," is a feeble attempt to relate other content areas to

Table 2

Teaching Suggestions in Kindergarten Manuals Requiring Help/Supervision of an Adult

Series	Total Number of Procedures in Three Selected Lessons	Percentage of Procedures Requiring an Adult
A	43	84
B	19	100
C	39	95
D	25	96
E	19	84
F	25	92

the language arts. The fact that the California guidelines explicitly applaud cooperative learning must surely be the reason for the recommendation to have Activity #11 carried out by pairs of children and, in addition, why the activity is labeled, "Cooperative Learning."

Viewed broadly, the described procedures also suggest that the "new" series are not as different from previous programs as the publishers want consumers to conclude. Clearly, however, they *are* bigger.

Second Question: Written Exercises

Even before the 18 randomly selected lessons were scrutinized, the fact that procedures suggested for achieving instructional objectives commonly concluded with references to written exercises was readily apparent because of their number. If at least some could be done by kindergartners working alone, their use would allow a teacher to continue instruction with less than the total class. Such a possibility resulted in the decision to examine the exercises next. As with the lessons just referred to, it was never the intention to make judgments about the value or the necessity of the exercises. This was in keeping with the fact that the study was concerned with what is in kindergarten manuals, not with its quality.

To deal with the written exercises (workbook pages and copymasters), each examiner began by going through a K manual to count their number. Uncovered during the counting was that five manuals showed all the exercises plus directions for how to use them, whereas the sixth showed some and merely referred to others.

The next step taken, therefore, was to determine whether the exercises actually shown in all the manuals could be done by kindergartners independently. To avoid subjective judgments, conclusions were based on how a manual directed teachers to use each exercise. Specifically, if the directions had the children and teacher working together, it was classified as requiring the help of a teacher or some other adult. If the directions were to have the children do part or all of an exercise alone, it was classified as not requiring an adult.

Results of the analysis are summarized in Table 3, which is on page 10. In reviewing Table 3, it is important to keep in mind that all the publishers have available far more exercises than those referred to in the manuals. The only conclusion that can be reached, therefore, is that 1989 basal reader programs are "generous" to a fault not only in the size of their K manuals but also in the number of exercises provided. The large number may come as a surprise to anyone who thought--or hoped--that the "California effect" would include a reduced number of exercise sheets.

Of greater significance to the concerns of the study is that a large portion of the exercises shown in the K manuals--72% to 100%--require an adult's attention. They do little, therefore, to facilitate a teacher's efforts to offer instruction that matches what particular kindergartners need and are ready to learn.

It is recognized that teachers may choose to have children do exercises in ways that depart from manual recommendations whenever the task is something that kindergartners can do alone. What is important to remember here is that the study was of manuals, not of predictions about teachers' decisions.

Third Question: Need for Lessons

Because the underlying purpose for examining the kindergarten manuals was to see whether they had the potential to facilitate and thus maximize instruction based on needs, one more analysis was done. In this case, the goal was to learn whether teachers are ever urged to find out whether an objective selected by a publisher for instruction is necessary. To realize that end, the decision was to examine all the lessons in the six manuals that dealt with the meanings of words. This topic was chosen because

Table 3

Written Exercises Referred to in Kindergarten Manuals

Series	No. of Exercises Referred to in Manual*	No. of Exercises Shown in Manual	Percentage of Exercises Shown Requiring Help of an Adult
A	325	212	72
B	212	212	95
C	217	217	86
D	72	72	94
E	240	240	84
F	244	244	100

*Exercises are workbook pages and copymasters.

discussions among the examiners, three of whom had worked with kindergartners, raised questions about the need to offer lessons for words like big, little, up, down, stop, and go.

Findings showed that a total of 684 instructional objectives for a variety of topics were in the six K manuals (M = 114). The percentage of the objectives that dealt with word meanings ranged from a low of 8% in one manual to a high of 27% in another. For purposes of the analysis, the most important finding about the lessons dealing with the meaning of words is that none of the six manuals ever encouraged teachers to consider the appropriateness of an objective for particular children. That the difficulty of the words selected for attention had no effect on the kind or quantity of instruction suggested was a consistent finding, too. This was in keeping with what became clear early in the analyses: All the manuals are written according to a pre-established format that discourages even small amounts of adaptation and variety.

The same unchanging instructional designs would also make it very difficult to comply with the California request quoted above: ". . . early language arts programs must provide for considerable flexibility in pacing and content" (p. 27). It seems appropriate to note here that whenever representatives of basal reader publishers are asked about the monotony of pre-established formats, they inevitably explain that they allow for "consistency." The suggestion that a few "surprises" might be appealing seems to fall on deaf ears.

An Unplanned Question

Kindergarten manuals were examined not only to see whether they offered any promise of helping teachers cope with differences among five-year-olds but also to learn about the phonics instruction they provided. As indicated earlier, phonics instruction in 1989 basal programs was one of the three areas that was to be looked at with care. Once the kindergarten manuals were examined, therefore, the phonics that was taught in the R manuals was identified. Almost immediately, the unexpected was found: Authors of the R manuals did not seem to know what the K manuals taught. Later, when phonics instruction at the preprimer level (PP) was examined, it became clear that the question of coordination had to be addressed.

Manual Formats

As a start, the formats used in K, R, and PP manuals in each of the six series were compared in order to see whether they might shed light on how these three sizeable parts of 1989 basal programs did or did not fit together. The variation found is noted below.

Manual Format	No. of Series
K, R, PP: same	2
K, R: same PP: different	2
K, PP: same R: different	1
R, PP: same K: different	1

The fact that type of format was unhelpful in providing clues about coordination among the three levels was verified when the content of the manuals was examined. To illustrate, in one of the two series in which the same format is used for K, R, and PP, each manual appears to have been written as if the other two did not exist. To cite a second example, the series in which K and PP share the same format but R does not, the content of R and PP is coordinated whereas K stands apart from the other two.

More specific reasons why a content analysis of K, R, and PP manuals raised questions both about coordination among manual authors and about who is supposed to use what are cited in the next section.

Content of the Manuals

It should be noted, first of all, that the discussion of content in this section is not meant to identify everything taught. Instead, content is treated simply as a means for clarifying whether the K, R, and PP levels are coordinated in ways that provide guidelines not only for deciding when and by whom each level should be used but also for deciding whether K and R are both necessary. On the assumption that the voluminous amount of material that comprises the K and R levels is costly, what can be omitted is as important to potential buyers as what needs to be used. (The K component is also available in an even more expensive kit form.)

As mentioned, one series provides K, R, and PP manuals that come close to being totally uncoordinated. At the opposite end of what turned out to be something of a continuum is another series that shows ample and obvious evidence of coordination. Even though coordination in and of itself is hardly sufficient to make a series superior, it does make it unnecessary to include this program in the present discussion. Given the purpose of the discussion, it is also unnecessary to include the series that lacks coordination in very obvious ways.

In order to examine coordination of content in the four remaining series, two topics were considered: phonics and whole word instruction. Phonics instruction was chosen because it is both pervasive and highly visible in all the K, R, and PP manuals. It was also chosen because phonics was one of the three topics preselected for attention at all grade levels. Whole word instruction was selected because it can be dealt with simply by noting the words that are directly named for children. Both topics also lend themselves to tracking instruction from one level to the next.

Information pertaining to phonics and whole word instruction is in Figures 1-4, which can be found on pages 13-16. The subject matter being traced through the K, R, and PP levels is indicated by the headings. This means, for example, that only what is done in the PP manuals that relates to the subject matter being traced is reported.

As the conclusions stated in Figures 1-4 point out, the content of the R and PP manuals fit together insofar as phonics and whole word instruction are concerned; however, the K manuals come close to being an isolated, ignored component. The fact that the K level is clearly a large and an expensive part of every 1989 program makes the isolation puzzling--at least to anyone who is not privy to considerations made by publishers when they planned their 1989 series.

Presumably, textbook selection committees are among those lacking "inside information." Equally plausible is that members of the same committees do not have the time required for the kind of analyses that were done for the present study. This makes it important to consider the Scope and Sequence Charts that are in each basal manual, supposedly to reveal at a glance the content that the manual covers.

Scope and Sequence Charts

The Scope and Sequence Charts that will be discussed are for the four series used to prepare Figures 1-4. This should help make the point that relying on Scope and Sequence Charts to learn about a basal program may lead to erroneous conclusions. In some instances, it may not even allow for conclusions. This is so for what is called Series One in Figure 1 and for what is referred to as Series Two in Figure 2. More specifically, because the former uses only two symbols--a circle for "applied skill" and a dot for "tested skill"--it is impossible to learn from the chart when what is applied or tested is taught. Series

Figure 1

Tracking Instruction: Series No. 1

K Manual	R Manual	PP Manual
19 consonant sounds Taught in alphabetical order. All sounds explicitly identified.	19 consonant sounds Acknowledged as having been taught in K. Reviewed. No sound explicitly identified.	19 consonant sounds Acknowledges sounds taught in R. Reviews sounds briefly, three at a time. First six are explicitly identified; others are not.
	5 short vowel sounds Very brief "optional" instruction. No sound explicitly identified.	5 short vowel sounds Said to be introduced at this level. No sound explicitly identified.
	5 phonograms Taught.	5 phonograms Used in phonics exercises. Receive no explicit attention as phonograms.
	16 words Taught directly.	16 words Acknowledges instruction in R. Reviews immediately.

Conclusion: Based on the content identified above, PP is dependent on R but not on K even though the K manual is very large and the materials that go with it very expensive. Why a shift is made from a direct identification of consonant sounds at the K level to indirect identifications later is not explained.

Figure 2

Tracking Instruction: Series No. 2

K Manual	R Manual	PP Manual
21 consonant sounds Taught in alphabetical order. No sound explicitly identified.	21 consonant sounds Dealt with in nonalphabetical order. The only time "review" is used is when the first two sounds receive attention. In these cases, "review" is not a label; it merely appears once in the pedagogical suggestions. With the other sounds, suggestions imply that initial instruction is being offered.	21 consonant sounds Acknowledges that the sounds are being reviewed but does not specify when they were taught.
5 long vowel sounds Taught in alphabetical order. No sound explicitly identified.	5 long vowel sounds Not mentioned.	5 long vowel sounds No acknowledgement of instruction in K. Teaches /ā/, /ē/ /ī/, /ō/, and that y may stand for /ī/. No sound explicitly identified.
	8 phonograms Taught.	8 phonograms Not mentioned.
	18 words Taught directly	18 words Acknowledged as having been taught in R in Word List at end of manual. No review. All in pre-primer selections; assumed to be known.

Conclusion: This series states directly that K is for kindergarten and R is for first grade; yet all that makes R necessary are the 18 words taught.

The fact that none of the words is reviewed in PP before they appear in selections children read must be questioned.

Figure 3

Tracking Instruction: Series No. 3

K Manual	R Manual	PP Manual
20 consonant sounds Taught in nonalphabetical order. All sounds explicitly identified.	20 consonant sounds Sixteen of the 20 sounds taught and explicitly identified. No acknowledgement of instruction in K.	20 consonant sounds Of the 16 sounds covered in R, 13 are reviewed once. That the 13 sounds are taught in R is acknowledged. Sounds are not directly identified. Instruction is provided for two other consonant sounds that are taught in K but not in R. Instruction in K not acknowledged.
5 short vowel sounds Taught in nonalphabetical order. Sounds explicitly identified.	5 short vowel sounds Only /ă/ and /ĭ/ are taught. Both explicitly identified. Instruction in K not acknowledged.	5 short vowel sounds That /ă/ and /ĭ/ are taught in R is acknowledged. The other three short vowel sounds are taught with no acknowledgement of the instruction in K.
	10 words Taught directly.	10 words Acknowledged as having been taught in R. All reviewed once but appear in selections children read before the review occurs.

Conclusion: Everything noted above shows that K is isolated from R and PP. The fact that words taught in R are used in PP before they are reviewed is an obviously questionable sequence.

Figure 4

Tracking Instruction: Series No. 4

K Manual	R Manual	PP Manual
19 consonant sounds Taught in nonalphabetical order. Sounds explicitly identified. Instruction for q (which should be qu) is "optional."	19 consonant sounds Sounds for four consonants taught and explicitly identified. No acknowledgement of their having been taught in K.	19 consonant sounds Four consonant sounds covered in R are reviewed. That they are taught at that level is acknowledged.
5 short vowel sounds Instruction is "optional." Sounds explicitly identified.	5 short vowel sounds Short sound for a and long sound for e taught and explicitly identified. No reference to optional instruction in K.	5 short vowel sounds The sounds /ă/ and /ē/ are reviewed. That they are taught in R is acknowledged.
4 words Taught directly.	4 words One of the four words is taught as a new word. No acknowledgement of its having been taught in K. No reference is made to the other three words.	4 words The one word taught in R is reviewed. That it was taught at that level is acknowledged. The other three words taught in K are presented as new words in selections children read.

Conclusion: All the information listed above points to coordination between the R and PP levels. Equally clear is disregard for what is taught in the K manual.

Two is even less generous as it relies on dots to communicate everything: taught, reviewed, applied, tested. What any given dot signifies, therefore, cannot be determined.

The Scope and Sequence Charts for Series Three provide more specific information but still have limitations. For unexplained reasons, for example, charts for K and R are confined to "Tested Skills" whereas the one for PP is not similarly restricted. One of the misleading consequences is that nothing is said in the R chart about the words taught at that level because they are not tested. Instead, they are in the PP chart, leading to the erroneous conclusion that nothing is done to teach words until the PP level.

Interestingly, charts in other series also do a disservice to their publishers through omissions. In Series One, for instance, the Scope and Sequence Charts indicate that nothing is done with consonant sounds in K even though 19 such sounds are taught. Context clues are referred to in R, but this is not communicated either.

The K level in Series Two also suffers from neglect. Although the manual covers five long vowel sounds, the dot in the Scope and Sequence Chart for this topic is placed not under K but under PP where, in fact, four rather than five such sounds are taught.

Series Four has a detailed Scope and Sequence Chart that is characterized by combinations of specific and nonspecific information. The combination is noticeable, for example, in the way topics are listed. Some are described very precisely (e.g., "Tracing and drawing a curved line" and "Fill in a bubble") whereas others are described globally. In the latter group are descriptions like "consonant sounds," "short vowel sounds," and "long vowel sounds."

Another combination of specific and nonspecific information in the same Scope and Sequence Charts is apparent when information is offered about where the listed topics are covered. In some instances, the number of the lesson that deals with a topic is provided; at other times a topic is simply followed by "Introduced, Maintained." Unexpectedly, this description occurs even for topics listed for both the K and the R levels.

A conclusion that was maintained throughout the examination of all the Scope and Sequence Charts is that they are not nearly as accurate or specific as they ought to be if they are to serve any useful purpose. When it is kept in mind that the size of 1989 manuals may tempt potential buyers to rely on the charts more than otherwise might be the case, their flaws cannot be taken lightly.

Discussion and Summary

To maximize objectivity, this report was confined to descriptions of some of what is in K manuals in six 1989 basal programs. Nothing was said, therefore, about the quality or necessity of what was found.

Whether the manuals help kindergarten teachers provide suitable, differentiated instruction determined what was looked at carefully and systematically. The conclusions reached, which apply to all six programs, are hardly encouraging for the following reasons. The lessons described are largely teacher-dependent. How they are described assumes the whole class is being instructed. Omitted are procedures for finding out whether a lesson is necessary. Also missing are suggestions for what some children can do while a teacher instructs others. Even though written assignments commonly function in keeping some children occupied, the large number in all the K manuals are heavily weighted with exercises requiring the supervision of an adult. The overall conclusion, therefore, is that those who planned the K manuals did not keep in mind two facts about kindergarten: First, members of a class *need* different kinds of instruction. Second, teachers *need* suggestions for worthwhile activities that five-year-olds are capable of doing without help.

Even though original plans for the study only included looking at lessons and exercise sheets, those examining the manuals could hardly overlook other parts because of their regular, highly predictable occurrence. Some of these segments give the appearance of a concern for differences among five-year-olds; consequently, it is timely to refer to these segments here. Only two will be described both to serve as illustrations and to reinforce the conclusion that the K manuals in 1989 basal programs are seriously remiss in facilitating appropriate instruction.

In one of the six series examined, each lesson concludes with three recommendations for "additional practice." They are always described as "easy," "average," and "challenge." (The mix of two adjectives and one noun is an example of the many flaws and even errors found in the K manuals--some, no doubt, the result of overly hasty preparations caused by the desire to meet the California deadline for submitting materials.) Examining all these "additional practice" recommendations showed that each one requires the assistance of a teacher or some other adult. Again, therefore, the question is, How is a teacher supposed to provide this differentiated practice when each recommendation assumes the availability of an adult?

The same recommendations raised another question that inevitably entered into discussions whenever the examiners met to report and compare findings: How can a teacher be expected to have even a small portion of the wide variety of materials that figure in a large number of suggestions in the K manuals? "But is this practical?" is a question that those who wrote the manuals either did not ask or did not ask often enough. "Is more necessarily better?" is another question that should have been considered.

The second example of a recurring recommendation that appears to recognize differences among five-year-olds but that is impractical is in another series. It has to do with diagnosing what children learned in the unit just concluded.[1] Placed in juxtaposition with what has already been reported about the K manuals, recommendations for using results of the diagnosis are so problematic as to require no comments:

> Children who are successful: move to next unit.
>
> Children who are somewhat successful: move to next unit; reteach needed skills.
>
> Children who are unsuccessful: move to next unit but skills are for exposure only.

It may also be unnecessary in this summary to refer once more to the problems caused by the size of all the K manuals. Certainly it is clear that the amount of material makes it very difficult for a teacher to know how to go about making judicious selections from all that is suggested. How to organize what is chosen so that it "fits" with a kindergarten program is yet another question that the nature of the manuals raises but that the publishers fail to answer.

As explained earlier, plans for examining the K manuals did not include looking at what they cover in relation to subject matter taught at subsequent levels. Once the analyses progressed to phonics, however, the need to look at coordination among successive manuals was apparent. For this report, the treatment of coordination encompasses three levels (K, R, PP) and two topics (phonics and whole word instruction).

The examination of coordination made only one conclusion possible: The K manuals stand apart from the R and PP manuals in subject matter taught and, in one case, in the pedagogy used to teach phonics. The isolation of the K program is perplexing for three reasons worth noting. To begin, successive levels in basal series are *supposed* to be coordinated. A more specific reason is that, if anything, it was use of the R manual that publishers left in limbo in their new programs. The fact that in all the series,

the K component is large and obviously costly is yet another reason to wonder why those responsible for the R and PP levels seem to have overlooked the earlier level.

It is reasonable to conjecture that publishers had their own motives for handling the K component as they did. Given the fact that getting on California's list of approved textbooks is of paramount importance, one motive may have something to do with efforts to win "approval." Whatever the reason, the lack of coordination between K and two subsequent levels is unfair and even deceiving to all who assume--perhaps naively--that systematic efforts are made to coordinate the materials that comprise a basal program.

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Footnote

[1]One topic persistently diagnosed in this K manual is letter-sound relationships; however, nothing is suggested for learning what children do or do not know. Again, the omission is probably a consequence of overly hasty preparations. The omission also serves to show what happens when manuals are developed with pre-established formats and, perhaps, with excessive dependence upon computers: If something is missing the first time a pre-established slot is used, it will be missing throughout the whole of the manual even when it is important.